

Iowa Fishing Report

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The Iowa Department of Natural Resources issues a weekly fishing report on Thursdays in an effort to provide the latest information heading into the weekend. The weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys, and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: In **Pool 9**, anglers are catching a few northern pike on tip-ups in Fish Lake and off Army Road in New Albin, but fishing is slow. Indian Slough has had some good sized crappies taken. Some panfish can be caught in the warm water releases at the Lansing Power Plant. In Black Hawk Park, a few very big bluegills and many bass are being reported.

In **Pool 10**, saugers can be caught below the dam at Lynxville using a jig and minnow. A few walleyes can also be caught here on jigs with twister tails. Use the smallest jig possible that can get to the bottom for best success. For ice fishing, angling has slowed near the spillway, but some northern pike and bass can be caught using shiners on tip-ups. The sorting of panfish is going on at the spillway as well. Some crappies are being caught at Spring Lake and Mud Slough north of Prairie du Chien. The Sny Magill Access has generally been slow but some fish are still being reported. Areas to try include Sandbar and Norwegian Lake. Methodist Lake has been the most consistent producer in the area but you may need an airboat to get there after the recent warm spell. All year, Bussey Lake has been hit or miss for bluegill and crappie. There are fish to be caught, but you may need to move around until you find them.

In **Pool 11**, a few saugers are being caught below the dam at Guttenberg using a jig and minnow. Both launches into the Guttenberg tailwater are open. Tailwater anglers can now boat and walk to Swift Slough and catch crappie and white bass. Only a few bluegills are being reported. Some ice fishing is taking place on Burtom Lake south of Cassville, but sorting of bluegills is required. In both of the new project areas in lower Pool 11 (Mud Lake and Sunfish Lake), yellow perch, pumpkinseeds and a few largemouth's are being caught, but they require much patience. Anglers with electronics report that they are still seeing schools of perch and bass, but they seem to be quite finicky. The best fishing seems to be later in the afternoon.

In **Pools 12 to 15**, the best fishing can be found in O'Leary's Lake, Kehough Slough, Tippy's and Frentress Lake (**Pool 12**), South Sabula Lake, Spring Lake, Edict Lake, and Mickelson's Lake (**Pool 13**), and Rock Creek (**Pool 14**). The best advice at this time of year is to keep moving to find fish.

Black Hawk and Bremer County area lakes and ponds: Ice fishing continues to be slow with no hot bites reported. Expect action to pick-up during the next weeks as oxygen levels improve and spring approaches. Ice anglers should use caution on lake edges and near inlets because ice has eroded during recent warm weather and melt events.

Casey Lake (Tama): Fishing is fair for bluegills using small ice jigs and wax worms. Use caution entering and leaving the ice, as well as near the inlet and outlet.

Cedar River (Bremer and Black Hawk), **Maquoketa River**, **Upper Iowa River**, **Turkey River** and **Wapsipinicon River** (Black Hawk and Buchanan): Interior rivers lost considerable amounts of ice during recent melt events, but some re-freezing has also occurred along edges and in eddies. Anglers are starting to fish deep-water pockets, below riffles, and near dams using jigs. Anglers should use caution when fishing area rivers due to water temperatures at freezing and unsafe ice.

George Wyth Lake and **Big Woods Lake** (Black Hawk): Anglers are catching some crappies around and after sunset using spikes, crappie minnows and Gulp maggots.

Hendricks Lake (Howard): Anglers continue to work to get fish but nice crappies and bluegills are starting to bite. Fish are being caught using a jig tipped with a wax worm or a small minnow. Try fishing your bait at various depths as fish are likely suspended off the bottom at this time of year. Evening is the best time to fish.

Lake Meyer (Winneshek): Fishing picked up a bit this week especially around the jetty. Anglers have been using light colored jigs tipped with a wax worm. Crappies are biting, but a soft touch is required. Bluegill, largemouth and even some small perch have been caught recently. Try fishing lures about 3 to 6 feet under the ice. The best time to fish seems to be around mid-day.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Anglers reported a slow down but this should be changing soon as some of the snow melts off the ice. Try fishing a different spot if a fish doesn't nibble right away. Also try suspending lures in 3 to 6 feet of water this time of year. There are a few areas with water on top of the ice out from the boat ramp.

Northeast Iowa Trout Streams: Many of the trout streams in northeast Iowa are free of ice and most of the snow is gone. Streams are in excellent condition and are expected to remain fishable as daytime temperatures remain around freezing. Some streams are experiencing insect hatches in the afternoon. Trout stockings on urban lakes include **North Prairie in Cedar Falls** (January 17), **Heritage Pond in Dubuque** (January 21), **Blue Pit in Mason City** (January 22), **Bacon Creek Lake in Sioux City** (January 29).

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 20: Many of the boat ramps in **Pools 16 to 20** of the Mississippi River are open but conditions could change with colder weather and snow in the forecast for the weekend. The main channel does have some chunks of ice and debris floating in it so take caution when boating. **Ice conditions in the backwaters are unsafe for ice fishing.**

In **Pool 16**, river stage at Lock and Dam 15 is 7.56 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing in the tailwaters has been slow. Ice jams breaking up in the Rock River have been bringing large chunks of ice and debris into the river. In **Pool 17**, river stage at Lock and Dam 16 is 6.36 feet. Walleye and sauger fishing in the tailwaters has been slow.

In **Pool 18**, river stage at Lock and Dam 17 is 8.79 feet. A few saugers are being caught at the dam on jigs and minnows. There have also been reports of channel catfish being caught on dead shad fished in deeper holes. In **Pool 19**, river stage at Lock and

Dam 18 is 5.64 feet. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers has been slow. In **Pool 20**, river stage at Lock and Dam 19 is 7.60 feet. No fishing report.

Lake Darling (Washington): The lake is completely drained.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Geode (Henry): Unsafe ice conditions.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Wapello (Davis): The lake has been completely drained.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): The lake is about 8 feet down for road/lake work throughout the fall and winter. **BOAT RAMPS ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE.**

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Southwest

Hickory Grove (Story): Ice conditions are good with 12 to 15 inches of ice. Some anglers are doing well late in the afternoon before sunset for crappies and bluegills using wax worms near the island. Most of the bluegills being caught are 7 to 8 inches range with some up to 9 inches, and the crappies are 9 to 10 inches with some up to 11 inches.

Big Creek (Polk): Ice conditions are good with 12 to 16 inches of ice. Both bluegill and crappie fishing is good over brush piles in the afternoon. Bluegills slow down towards dark, but crappies continue to be caught after sunset. The best night crappie bite has been on the roadbed out from the Ensign shelter parking area. Chartreuse or glowing jigs tipped with wax worms, spikes, or minnow heads have been the best producers.

Contact Ben Dodd at (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the above area lakes

Ice conditions have deteriorated during the past several weeks. Recent cold nights have put skim ice on some of the small lakes and ponds that were open a few days ago. Some mid-sized lakes have more open water than ice covered areas. Walking on the ice is not recommended anywhere in the southwest or south central portion of the state. Anglers can use a boat to access many of the same areas.

Three Mile Lake (Union): Ice is poor and open water exists around the edges a several areas of the mid portion.

Twelve Mile Lake (Union): The lake has areas of open water and the ice is in poor condition.

Lake Icaria (Adams): The mid portion of the lake is open.

Contact Gary Sobotka at (641) 464-3108 for information on the above area lakes.

Skim ice has formed again on lakes and ponds with recent cold temperatures. Late season ice is variable and dangerous. If venturing out use extreme caution and test ice frequently. Ice fishing is not recommended.

Contact Bryan Hayes at (712) 769-2587 for information on the above area lakes.

For more information on general fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Northwest

Kids Corner

If taking a child ice fishing this weekend in the Spirit Lake area, take them to the North Grade on the north end of Big Spirit Lake. Access is easy since most anglers have been fishing right along the shore. Yellow perch and bluegills have been the most frequently caught species along with a few black crappies. Use a small ice jig a few inches off the bottom tipped with a wax-worm jigged very lightly. If fishing for perch use a slip bobber and a small hook. Place a split shot a few inches above the hook with the minnow hooked lightly through the back. Set the depth of the minnow six inches off the bottom.

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Bluegills are being caught in Angler's Bay along the weed beds and in open areas, or at the North Grade along the remnant lily pad field with small ice jigs tipped with wax worms. Yellow perch are biting in the main lake basin from the pump house north towards Crandall Beach or at the North Grade using jigging lures tipped with live bait or a slip bobber rig baited with a minnow. Crappies are biting in Angler's Bay along weed lines on small ice jigs tipped with wax-worms.

West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Bluegills are biting in Miller's and North bays along the weed beds, and between Pocahontas and Eagle points on small ice jigs tipped with wigglers or wax worms. Crappies are being caught between Pocahontas and Eagle points with small ice jigs tipped with wax worms or wigglers. Northern pike are being caught using live bait on tip-ups in Smith's and North bays. For yellow perch, fish the rock reef in Hayward's Bay with small teardrop jigs tipped with live bait.

East Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Yellow bass are being caught at sunrise and sunset between Stony and Jingles points with ice jigs tipped with live bait or a slip bobber and minnow.

Larry Wilson Wildlife Management Area Lower Pond (Dickinson): Bluegills are biting on a small ice jig tipped with a wax worm.

Sportsman Recreation Area (Palo Alto): Bluegills and crappies are biting on small ice jigs tipped with live bait.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass are still biting on the west end of the lake around Dodge's Point and Farmer's Beach. A few walleye and white bass are also being caught while fishing for yellows. Fish are being caught in 7 to 10 feet of water on jigging spoons. Ice depth remains 20 to 25 inches.

Silver Lake (Worth): A few yellow perch are being caught fishing the north side of the lake by the county park. Try using a jig tipped with a minnow for best results.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Fishing is fair to good for walleye on minnows in 7 feet of water. The lake is covered by 10 to 20 inches of ice but there are some open areas by storm drains. Don't forget there is a 17 to 22-inch protected slot on walleye in Storm Lake.

Brushy Creek Lake (Webster): Ice conditions have improved, but ice in some areas around the trees and by the spillway is only 1-inch thick. A few crappies have been caught at sunrise using minnows.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

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